

COBB FOOTBALL FRIDAY

K.J. Cainion's running, defense leads Whitefield to third straight victory

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Whitefield quarterback Luke Persons (10) prepares to pass the ball during the first half of Friday's away game against St. Francis Academy in Alpharetta. Natrice Miller

MILTON — Despite giving up a score in the second play of the game, Whitefield Academy continued its game plan and beat St. Francis 24-6 on Friday.

Defense became the key factor for Whitefield (3-2, 2-1 Region 6A) as nine of St. Francis' 10 possessions ended in a punt.

The Wolfpack's K.J. Cainion rushed for 154 yards and one touchdowns, while Luke Persons threw for 54 yards and a score before leaving with an injury. Austin Sumter had two receptions for 84 yards.

“When Luke got hurt with the sprained ankle, Davis Eaton and Thomas Joiner came in and backed that up, and that was huge for us,” Whitefield coach John Hunter said. “We got scored on on the second play, but we buckled down and made some adjustments and we played well.”

Less than a minute into the game, St. Francis (1-4, 0-3) jumped to an early lead as Sam Hines connected with T.J. Tampa for a 62-yard touchdown pass.

Whitefield answered back on its first possession as Persons threw a 48-yard touchdown pass to Sumter and tied the game at 7-all with 10:17 left in the first quarter.

Late in the second quarter, St. Francis punter Josh Harps-Zhu failed to kick the ball and was tackled on his own 23-yard line, which gave Whitefield momentum.

Cainion was stopped short of the end zone as he rushed for 22 yards, but it help set up Joiner's 1-yard touchdown to give Whitefield its first lead of the game.

Cainion rushed for a 5-yard score, his only one of the game, during Whitefield's first possession of the second half. It capped off a five-play, 43-yard drive.

Matthew Sumlin scored the final three points of the game for Whitefield, knocking down a 23-yard field goal.

The Wolfpack will return home next week for their first home game in nearly a month, facing Fellowship Christian.

“We're not done yet. It feels good to over .500,” Hunter said. “It's a big deal for the kids, coaches and school, and let's see what we can do in the future.”